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SUBJECT:: USCAR: NYT Saturday editorial & JLC letter to editor

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TEXT:

New York Times, June 10, 2002
 Letters to the Editor:

Bush Is Concerned About the Climate

To the Editor:

"U.S. Sees Problems in Climate Change" (front page, June 3) says that the predictions of the U.S. Climate Action Report 2002 "present a sharp contrast to previous statements on climate change by the administration."

Actually, last year President Bush noted the rise in surface temperatures and concentrations of greenhouse gases, and said that "the National Academy of Sciences indicates that the increase is due in large part to human activity." He also cautioned that significant scientific uncertainties remain, emphasizing that "the policy challenge is to act in a serious and sensible way, given the limits of our knowledge."

The new report reinforces each of these points, discussing the "considerable uncertainty" about the science, natural variability of the climate, and the fact that "definitive prediction of potential outcomes is not yet feasible."

President Bush's policies are appropriate to the current state of climate-change science. By administering 67 programs to curb greenhouse gas emissions and investing \$4.5 billion each year in research and development, the administration is responsibly addressing this important issue.

JAMES L. CONNAUGHTON
 Chairman, White House Council
 on Environmental Quality
 Washington, June 7, 2002

New York Times, June 8, 2002
 Editorial
 Global Warming Follies

President Bush continues to stumble on the issue of global warming. Last year, to the dismay of America's allies, he rejected the 1997 Kyoto Protocol committing industrialized nations to reduce greenhouse gases. He also reneged on his campaign pledge to impose mandatory caps on carbon dioxide, the most important of those gases. Now he has dismissed a report written by his own experts. It asserts that human activities are largely responsible for global warming and warns that the environmental consequences could be severe.

The report is the third in a series of studies required by a climate treaty signed by Mr. Bush's father in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but the first issued by the new administration. It was presented to the United Nations last week and appeared unannounced on the Environmental Protection Agency's Web site. It does not openly challenge the voluntary approach Mr. Bush has recommended. But it is a serious study reflecting the views of scientists in

six federal agencies, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and its findings align the administration with most mainstream scientists as to the causes and consequences of climate change. It deserves better than Mr. Bush's contemptuous response: "I read the report put out by the bureaucracy," he said, before repeating his opposition to Kyoto.

The report obviously presented Mr. Bush with a ticklish problem. Having abandoned Kyoto and his campaign pledges, he had left himself without a meaningful strategy to deal with climate change. To acknowledge the truth of the study would have required him to offer such a strategy, or at least something more imaginative than the pallid voluntarism favored by many of his corporate friends and big campaign contributors.

So he chose to brush it off. His timing was unfortunate. On Tuesday Japan ratified the Kyoto agreement, as have the members of the European Union. These countries do not expect Mr. Bush to drop his opposition to Kyoto. But they have a right to expect something more than a casual rejection of inconvenient truths.

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